

Press Release

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APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Pinwheel Gardens are being planted in Mississippi

(JACKSON, Miss.) — Each year the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children's Services, community organizations and concerned citizens, join together to raise awareness of the need to prevent child abuse and neglect in the state. This year, MDHS partnered with the Mississippi Children's Trust Fund, Prevent Child Abuse Mississippi, and Millsaps College Kappa Delta Sorority to "plant" a Pinwheel Garden in the Jackson metro area.

"Pinwheels for Prevention" is part of a national campaign that brings awareness to communities about child abuse and neglect. The pinwheels serve as a reminder that child abuse and neglect is happening in our neighborhoods, and represent hope, healing and justice for the children of Mississippi.

Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant signed a proclamation to underline his commitment to children in the state. "In Mississippi, we take the safety and security of children very seriously. I urge everyone to join us as we work to make Mississippi a place where children can grow up free from harm and in an environment that encourages learning, growth and opportunity," said Gov. Bryant.

"MDHS is committed to protecting and serving Mississippi's children," said MDHS Executive Director Rickey Berry. "I urge citizens to be aware of children's needs and call the 24-hour Child Abuse hotline at 1-800-222-8000 if they suspect a child is being abused or neglected. Child abuse is everyone's business."

The national focus to prevent child abuse began in the early 1980s to address the alarming rate at which children across the country were being abused. The Blue Ribbon Campaign, which runs in conjunction with the national campaign, was launched in 1989 by a grandmother in Virginia who tied a blue ribbon to her car as a tribute to her 3-year-old grandson who died from abuse. Child protection agencies and advocates across the nation recognize the blue ribbons as symbols to remind everyone to of the need to report abuse and neglect of our most vulnerable—our children.

If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, call Mississippi Centralized Intake 24-hour Hotline at 1-800-222-8000 or go online to www.msabusehotline.mdhs.ms.gov.

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